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Rooming Houses in Halifax:
Issues, opportunities, and policies
Interview Summary Report

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PROJECT SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Rooming houses, or single room occupancies (SROs), are part of the private rental market in Halifax Regional Municipality. Historically this form of housing was common for both the working class and short-term visitors (Slater, 2004). However, over time, rooming houses have experienced declining numbers, with shifts in market conditions and changing tenant characteristics. Today, rooming houses provide an alternative for those seeking affordable housing. They often house the working poor, the unemployed, and new Canadians (Campsie, 1994; Freeman, 2014).

Lack of higher-level government investment in social housing has resulted in increasing reliance of low-income tenants on the private market for housing (Gaetz, Gulliver, and Richter, 2014). Rooming houses tend to be the least expensive private market option (CMHC, 2002). This form of housing faces many challenges such as market pressures, aging housing stock, fires, and development renewal efforts (Kaufman and Distasio, 2014). Thus many Canadian cities, Halifax included, have seen significant losses in rooming house units.

Deteriorating quality and the loss of rooming house stock are major policy concerns. Tenant safety may be threatened when rooming houses are not kept up to standards, while loss of rooming houses limits the availability of one affordable housing option. At the same time that Halifax has lost licensed and unlicensed rooming houses providing accommodations for low-income tenants, the city experienced a significant increase in the presence of "quasi" rooming houses -- defined as properties that have 6 or more rooms to rent but that are not licensed, advertised, or otherwise labelled as rooming houses, and which typically house university students (Lee, 2016; Freeman, 2014). The growing presence of quasi rooming houses demonstrates the continued demand for single-room occupancies, but also reflects a shift in the markets that landlords may be targeting.

Municipalities often monitor housing stock and conditions through licensing programs. Halifax introduced a minimum standards bylaw with provisions for licensing rooming houses in 2003. Monitoring rooming houses helps ensure safety, yet housing advocates recognize a need to balance safety and affordability when considering regulatory intervention (CMHC, 2000). Beyond

ensuring basic standards, zoning is commonly used to regulate the location of rooming houses in cities. In Halifax, rooming houses are generally permitted in zones allowing multi-family buildings (SHS Consulting, 2015). HRM staff recognize that current zoning for rooming houses may contribute to the decline in numbers, as owners often opt to convert the houses into more profitable uses (SHS Consulting, 2015). In a survey of rooming houses in Halifax, Lee (2016) found that over one-third converted to apartments over the last two decades.

Following the study completed by Lee (2016), the research team conducted interviews with community members to explore the social and policy context of rooming houses in HRM. The goal of the study was to discover community experiences and perspectives on this form of housing and its policy context. Through the interview process, we gained better understanding of the challenges and opportunities for rooming houses in Halifax and begin gathering ideas for appropriate strategies to protect and encourage safe and affordable single-room housing. The research reported here contributes to an ongoing study of rooming houses in Halifax.[1]

PROJECT PHASE ONE

In the initial stage of the team's research on rooming houses, Uytae Lee investigated where rooming houses are located in Halifax and how supply has changed over time. The goal of his research was to "create a better understanding of SRO change in the context of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) where the decline of rooming houses and prevalence of quasi rooming houses are widely reported but poorly documented" (Lee, 2016, p.3). Locating rooming houses in the HRM is the first step to opening discussions around better policy and regulation for this form of housing (Lee, 2016).

Phase 1 investigated three research questions.

1. Where were rooming houses and quasi-rooming houses located in Halifax from 1995 to the present?
2. How many SRO units have been lost in HRM from 1995 to the present and how?

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[1] The study is part of a broader investigation of neighbourhood change in Halifax. See http://theoryandpractice.planning.dal.ca/neighbourhood/index.html

3. What are some differences between rooming houses and quasi rooming houses?

The project work completed in phase one included collecting and reviewing material (newspapers, reports, council minutes) related to rooming houses and their regulation; field testing sites to document and map rooming house locations; and investigating current rooming house status, zoning, media coverage, and property assessments.

Lee identified 208 rooming houses in Halifax, which existed at some point between 1995 and 2016: 151 recognized as rooming houses and another 57 quasi rooming houses. Out of the 151 rooming houses operating during the period, only 17 remained licensed and open in early 2016. Quasi rooming houses clustered around universities, providing an affordable option primarily for students. The loss of licensed rooming houses, targeted at low-income single individuals in Halifax facing housing barriers, is a concern. Based on these findings, phase two of the research reaches out to the community to understand how the loss of rooming houses may be affecting those in need of affordable housing.

PROJECT PHASE TWO

Phase two examines the issues, opportunities and policies surrounding rooming houses in Halifax. The goal of this phase was to understand how SROs operate in Halifax and consider the challenges facing the SRO sector. We gained a better understanding both of the loss of licensed rooming houses and the "quasi rooming house" phenomenon occurring in certain areas of the city. Interviews with community stakeholders helped us understand the social and policy context of SROs in Halifax by providing "on the ground" experiences and perspectives from community stakeholders.

Phase 2 investigates the following research questions:

1. How are rooming houses understood and regulated in Halifax?
2. What are the challenges facing rooming house and quasi rooming house residents and owners in Halifax?
3. What policies and/or regulations can contribute to resolving identified issues? [2]

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[2] To be completed in phase 3 (next phase of the study).

Project work completed thus far in phase two include the review of HRM policy and regulations that affect the supply of SRO housing, reading literature on the historical, social, and political context of rooming houses, and interviewing community stakeholders to identify issues related to providing SRO dwelling units.

INTERVIEWS

In June 2016, the Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership conducted in-person interviews to investigate the perspectives of community stakeholders in Halifax. Community members included rooming house residents, housing providers, municipal officials, housing advocates, and members of neighbourhood resident associations within the HRM. We asked participants to share their experiences around rooming houses and their perspectives on the role rooming houses play in the local housing market. We also asked for opinions on the effectiveness of the current regulatory regime in monitoring and encouraging this form of housing. Through the research, we discovered how a group of community members understand the social and policy context of rooming houses in Halifax.

All interviews took place in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Most interviews occurred around North End Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth. Most housing offices and other social service centres are located in these areas of the HRM. We conducted interviews in a semi-structured format (interview questions are attached in the Appendix). The format allowed participants to deviate from the prepared interview questions to share experiences and insights. We conducted most interviews one-on-one and in-person. One interview was conducted via Skype and one interview had two participants present. The shortest interview ran for 16 minutes while the longest interview ran for 1 hour and 5 minutes. The average length of the interviews was about 40 minutes. We audio recorded all interviews except one (at the request of the participant). A professional transcriptionist transcribed the interviews, which we edited for accuracy before analyzing the contents. The next sections describe the sample and briefly highlight some findings.

PARTICIPANTS

We interviewed 37 community stakeholders. The type of stakeholder and number of participants by sex is displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. *INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS*

Stakeholder	Male	Female	Total Participants
Municipal and Provincial Officials	3	3	6
Housing Advocates	7	7	14
Rooming House Residents	5	4	9
Housing Providers	2	3	5
Neighbourhood Association Members	1	2	3
Total	**18**	**19**	**37**
Percent	49%	51%	100%

Interview participants are almost equally representative of the sexes. Housing advocates constituted the largest number of participants: 14 of the 37 people interviewed. Housing advocates include a wide range of individuals, from housing officers to social workers to members of organizations working on affordable housing initiatives and others. We contacted individuals through professional email addresses and phone numbers available on websites. Many housing advocates have a large network of contacts and suggested other people to interview, including other advocates, rooming house residents and housing providers. Rooming house residents made up 9 of the 37 interviews and had experience either living in a rooming house or a quasi rooming house. Housing providers proved difficult to get in contact with: only five agreed to an interview. Neighbourhood association members were also a challenge to recruit: three participants agreed to an interview. Few associations responded to our emails and many declined due to having little or no knowledge on the subject matter.

The topic of rooming houses can lead to sensitive subject matter. To avoid negative repercussions from sharing personal information, confidentiality is ensured. Individuals will not be named in this study but labelled by stakeholder type.

WHAT PEOPLE SAID

Using thematic analysis, this section identifies and briefly summarizes the major themes. Experiences and perspectives, which came up multiple times in interviews, are noted as common findings. The interview data are summarized into basic preliminary findings, which provide valuable insights into the Halifax context.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS BY RESPONDENT TYPE

Stakeholder	Common Topics Voiced
Housing Advocates	o Need for action on poor conditions o Landlord accountability o Empowerment of tenants o Collaboration between actors o Rooming houses described as a "stepping stone" (temporary housing)
Rooming House Residents	o Negative experiences o Lack of options o Desire for "like-mindedness" in rooming house tenants o Landlord accountability o Rooming houses described as a good temporary option or specific niche (eg, for seasonal workers)
Housing Providers	o Lack of support (for tenants and landlords) *especially those with mental health issues o Profitable but damage costs remain high o Quasi rooming houses have more potential profit (due to clientele) o Openness to partnerships o "Personality management" described as the biggest challenge o Rooming house described as a "starting point" in housing
Municipal Officials	o Lack of communication between departments involved in affordable housing o "Broken" definitions and contradictory planning rules o The private market often does not provide adequate affordable housing

	o Licensing is essential and should expand – get quasi rooming houses regulated o Collect and share more data on rooming houses o Reconsider name, definition, and zoning for rooming houses
Resident Association Members	o Target areas for rooming house locations (outside current areas) o Concern for fast conversions into quasi-rooming houses around campuses o Absentee landlords described as a major issue

HOUSING ADVOCATES

Some of the common themes arising from housing advocates included challenges when pushing for action on substandard housing conditions, lack of landlord accountability, the need to empower tenants, recognizing and encouraging well-managed rooming houses, need for government action and public education, and appropriate funding and collaboration between multiple sectors. Advocates said they often attempt to help tenants without involving landlords as a strategy to prevent eviction. Many witness poor housing conditions and encourage prosecution of bad landlords. They recognize tenants are often in a position where speaking up is improbable. Housing advocates often encourage the city to accept third party complaints as a basis for investigating a property. Rooming houses prove an economic model that can and does work well in certain circumstances. However, rooming houses often suffer from substandard conditions.

Rooming houses are generally seen as symptom of the lack of public sector, purpose-built affordable housing. They fill a need for affordable housing, but must be monitored to ensure safe conditions. Beyond licensing and enforcement of basic standards, a common suggestion by advocates is to have a live-in superintendent. Rooming houses are recognized as a flexible form of housing and there are many different possible models, some with supports and some without. They can be the "stepping stone" to more permanent housing if done appropriately.

Overall, advocates argue that government involvement has the potential to create more accountability and greater acceptance of this form of housing. However, they argue for clear policies and enforced regulations with oversight. Advocates had several suggestions including developing a public list of rooming houses, mandating rooming houses be accessible for those

with disabilities, creating incentives to license, proactively seeking out well-managed rooming houses to partner with and provide outreach services, working toward changing the political attitude toward rooming houses, and giving the city a bigger role in affordable housing.

ROOMING HOUSE RESIDENTS

Rooming house residents talked more about bad experiences than good ones. It became obvious that there is a broad spectrum of rooming houses in the city with conditions depending both on tenants and landlords. The rooming house model itself is not seen as the issue, but instead poor management and tenant conflict lead to bad experiences. Some of the common issues in rooming houses include absentee or abusive landlords, the transient nature of tenants, lack of safety and security, food insecurity, pests or bugs, drugs, noise, lack of open space, and difficult tenant relationships. Some of the attractive qualities of rooming houses expressed by residents are the price, location, and camaraderie.

Individuals often end up living in rooming houses due to having no other options and no support network. Most said they would not choose to live in a rooming house if given a better choice or more disposable income. However, they thought that rooming houses prove a good option for people, such as seasonal workers, seeking short-term accommodation. Many recognize a need for rooming houses and believe SROs can work if well managed and if tenants are "like-minded." The term "like-minded" came up multiple times in references to personal experiences and common interests or lifestyles. For example, a few licensed rooming houses attempted to place people with similar lifestyles together, such as those placing those struggling alcohol issues together instead of with people struggling with other issues such as drug addiction or mental health concerns. Tenants saw this as an attempt to keep the peace, as people with similar lifestyles tend to be more sympathetic toward one another.

Rooming houses appear harder to find at an affordable price on the Peninsula than in previous years. Some reasons for reduced availability include gentrification and increased student competition: tenants suggested that students compete with other low-income individuals and are often preferred by landlords. Residents suggest that an influx of university students contributes to higher rents on the Peninsula. Vacancies exist in rooming houses, but typically only in the poorly managed ones. Common descriptions tenants offered of an ideal rooming house included a private bathroom, kept up to code with surprise inspections, supports for tenants, a live-in superintendent, and accessible rooms. A few participants mentioned quasi rooming

houses as a good option for domestic students; international students may face more vulnerability to landlord abuse. These homes provide an opportunity for students to live on the Peninsula, close to universities. The most common issue raised about quasi rooming houses was absentee landlords. Tenants of rooming houses and quasi rooming houses mentioned prosecuting landlords as a task beyond their means in time and money.

HOUSING PROVIDERS

We interviewed property owners and managers of rooming houses in Halifax. They said they generally received no support in operating their rooming houses. Owners and managers mentioned a lack of support for tenants, resulting in the landlord becoming the sole support. They noted that rooming house residents often have assigned social workers, yet housing providers claimed to never, or rarely, see the workers. These accounts by housing providers suggest that it is difficult for tenants to get in contact with their social workers, especially if tenants have limited mobility and/or lack a phone. A couple of property managers described their role as "motherly" or paternalistic toward tenants. Managing a rooming house appears to require greater involvement than non-rooming house rental properties. Housing providers expressed interest in greater supports both for tenants and themselves. One participant specifically mentioned that city inspectors could play a more proactive role in identifying possible support opportunities.

Diverse opinions arose when housing providers were discussing economic conditions for rooming houses. Many participants claimed to make a profit, yet identified damage to property as a major cost. Damage costs can affect the profitability of the rooming house. One common cost is replacing doors, which are often damaged by tenants or police in the event of incidents. We did not interview any property owners of quasi rooming houses; however, other property owners mentioned that students tend to have more disposable income than people relying on social assistance, which could allow property owners to raise rents. One of the biggest challenges mentioned by landlords is "personality management" as property managers becomes responsible for "babysitting" tenant behaviour, which they often feel is beyond their role. Examples of tenant disputes came up often. For some, tenant interactions make the job worthwhile; for others the burden causes them to consider other management opportunities.

Overall, housing providers felt a comprehensive approach is key to well run and supported rooming houses. Partnerships with the city, the province, and potentially universities are welcomed. One suggestion was for the province to purchase and manage rooming houses in the city. Landlords described rooming houses as a "starting point" for many individuals to get back on their feet. However, the social assistance rate is not sufficient to adequately provide for tenant needs and there are few or no social supports in rooming houses. In particular, tenants with mental health issues require more supports. Rooming house landlords provide an affordable housing option, but many would appreciate external supports for their tenants. Ideas for assistance include more social worker involvement (including communication with landlords and tenants), a revision of the Tenancy Act eviction process for potentially dangerous tenants, and partnerships with site specific funding. Property managers would also like to see accessibility regulations, and enforcement of licensing and minimum standards for all rooming houses.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

We conducted interviews with municipal officials and one provincial official. Officials often described the affordable housing system as "broken." Many claimed a lack of federal investment, ineffective provincial policies, and powerlessness at the municipal level. Without the appropriate tools and mechanism in place and overall poor communication among departments, little can be done to provide affordable housing at the municipal level. Many officials voiced a desire for greater city involvement, funded by higher-level governments. The definitions for rooming houses are described as "broken" with unclear bylaws that are hard to enforce. The municipality's role in affordable housing is to ensure life safety in residential accommodations and to regulate land-use. However, when planning rules do not work, the city is put in a difficult spot. Some municipal officials used the term "toothless system" referring to difficulty enforcing bylaws when instances of substandard conditions become known. They also mentioned the lack of social housing to replace the potential loss of rooming house stock.

Officials noted that the private sector provides an affordable option through rooming houses, yet the standards are not always acceptable. Respondents commonly understood that the private sector often does not provide adequate affordable housing and landlords are not paid enough through social assistance to adequately support tenants. Officials say the public sector must provide sufficient amounts of social housing to ensure the need for affordable housing is met.

With sufficient social housing, people may seek private market options but they will not be solely reliant on the private market. Licensing is recognized as a crucial step in ensuring safe and affordable housing in the private sector, yet it often is not well enforced and does not address some of the issues seen in quasi rooming houses. Without a clear definition and expectations for quasi rooming houses, landlords are "wildcatting rooming houses in a residential neighbourhood" (Municipal official). Most quasi rooming houses are not structurally designed for high occupancy and frequently present safety issues.

Municipal officials call for a revision of rooming house definitions. One suggestion was to remove the name "rooming house" altogether in favour of the term "residential income property," defined by whether or not the owner lives on-site. Officials assumed less regulation would be needed when a property is supervised by a resident owner or manager. Staff said that the city often becomes aware of quasi rooming houses due to complaints by neighbours to city councillors. A common interest for municipal officials is to gather more data on quasi rooming houses and share this information. Neighbours and other members of the public were mentioned as a possible source of information. Once quasi rooming house locations are identified, expectations can be created and land-use can be adjusted to reflect market conditions. These expectations can then be communicated to the public in hopes of gaining community acceptance through assurance that rooming houses will be monitored and run properly. Licensing must expand, officials argued, but they recognized that the process has to be slow and careful, considering all consequences.

Officials expected that gathering data will reveal the current need for rooming houses and lead to discussions on policies and models suited to the Halifax context. Overall, they showed an understanding that more unlicensed rooming houses than licensed exist. Officials hope to bring policies and enforcement together to rectify substandard conditions without removing an affordable housing option. Some ideas they offered included proactively seeking landlords for partnerships, raising income assistance, revising provincial grants, allowing community land trusts[3], and doing pilot projects with new rooming house models.

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[3] Community land trusts are private, non-profit organizations that acquire and hold land for the purpose of providing affordable access to land and housing for a community (CMHC, 2016).

RESIDENT ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

The individuals representing resident associations and/or living as neighbours of rooming houses generally have no issue with the rooming house model, but said locations should be targeted. Participants suggested using vacant buildings to build affordable housing in appropriate areas. One resident association member argued that without targeted areas and monitoring, the provincial government appears to fund landlords who provide substandard housing. One common idea offered was for the province to run rooming houses instead of leaving the task to private landlords.

In neighbourhoods around the universities, neighbours noticed a rapid transition from owner-occupied homes to rental housing aimed at students. Some common issues neighbours experienced from higher density included noise, garbage, traffic, and anti-social behaviours. Absentee landlords were described as a common issue for neighbours. Respondents spoke of an overwhelming concern for neighbourhood balance and character. Both Dalhousie University and the Halifax Regional Police were described as helpful in addressing issues; however, follow-up was seen as an issue. Respondents thought that the onus has been placed on local citizens to educate themselves on local bylaws and call the city to enforce them. Some ideas resident respondents suggested for change included providing more on-campus housing, requiring live-in landlords, implementing fees for conversion of properties, and providing more accessible public information about enforcing standards.

CONCLUSIONS

Some of the common themes addressed by most stakeholders included landlord accountability, the possibility of effective rooming house models, rooming houses as a niche market, need for more purpose-built affordable housing (potentially provincially-run rooming houses), public awareness and education, supports for tenants and others, and a proactive and collaborative approach.

One of the strongest themes in the interview data was the need for landlord accountability through enforcing appropriate standards. Another shared understanding was that rooming houses are a flexible form of housing that can provide for multiple types of tenants. Participants

mentioned multiple times that "like-mindedness"-- meaning common experiences and lifestyles -- makes for a better experience for tenants.

The greatest similarities in stakeholder opinion occurred among housing providers and rooming house residents. They agreed that one of the most challenging aspects of rooming houses is dealing with multiple personalities/lifestyles and tenant conflict. Some other common ideas included the need for accessibility in rooming houses, a wish for support for tenants, and the desire to see absentee or neglectful landlords held accountable.

Rooming houses do provide an affordable option, but many stakeholders claimed this option is not good enough. Respondents noted the loss of licensed rooming houses while many unlicensed rooming houses go unmonitored. Substandard conditions exist and are unacceptable. Most stakeholders agreed that licensing the rooming house sector is essential. Some advocated more effective enforcement and monitoring of bylaws. Many thought that the licensing regime could expand to encompass the various forms in which rooming houses exist, including quasi rooming houses aimed at students. Some suggested that land-use zones need to be re-evaluated to ensure well-managed rooming houses can exist and make profit. Most respondents recognized the need for rooming houses and hoped for retention and expansion of this form of housing. Targeting areas for rooming houses proved a popular suggestion.

Rooming houses provide affordable housing, but they do not fulfill all affordable housing needs. Many individuals living in rooming houses would prefer other accommodations, but have no other option. Purpose-built affordable housing provided by the public sector is still a significant need in Halifax. The non-profits in the city, currently providing affordable housing, need greater support to remain open. In sum, rooming houses can only be part of the solution to affordable housing.

The research suggests the need for greater public awareness on the benefits of rooming houses for the community. Public information on where rooming houses are can help the city locate properties currently under the radar, particularly quasi rooming houses. Also, assuring that rooming houses are monitored to meet acceptable standards is essential in gaining

community acceptance. Finally, if rooming houses are to continue to provide an affordable housing option, supports are needed for both tenants and landlords. In particular, these supports should be mobile and proactive in seeking rooming houses clients.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This report provides a summary of the interview process, the characteristics of the interview respondents, and preliminary findings. Interview data, along with previous work accomplished by the Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, will be further analyzed in Fall 2016. Mixed methods will be used to triangulate the interview findings with other research. The data will be synthesized, interpreted, and disseminated to the public. Reports relating to the NCRP project can be found on Dr. Jill Grant's research website.
http://theoryandpractice.planning.dal.ca/neighbourhood/index.html

Phase 3 of the project in spring 2017 will accomplish the following objective:

> To review policies and current best practices in managing and regulating rooming houses in North America and Europe and evaluate for suitability to the Halifax context.

The work will explore the effects of particular kinds of regulatory interventions on housing supply. We will look at the experience of other communities to identify examples of community interventions that may have yielded positive results in protecting the supply of SRO housing options.

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APPENDIX - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Municipal Officials

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me today. I appreciate you finding the time in your schedule to give us your perspective on rooming houses, or single-room occupancies.

Could you begin first with telling me a little bit about yourself – maybe your job and what involvement you have with affordable housing issues?

Given the different perspectives people have on rooming houses, how would you define what a rooming house is? [*Possible follow up:* What makes it different from other kinds of rentals?]

What population or clientele does the rooming house serve?

What experiences have you had with rooming houses?

What kinds of issues have you encountered with rooming houses? [*follow ups:* Any issues related to: living conditions, management of the property, affordability of the units, city regulation of the use, behavior of residents or landlords]

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address some of these issues related to rooming houses?

In what ways are the numbers of rooming house units changing in Halifax? (*to your knowledge)

How are the locations of rooming house units changing?

What factors may be responsible for changes in the number or location of units?

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address issues related to changes in the number or location of rooming houses in the city?

In what ways do municipal regulations affect rooming houses?

What kinds of municipal regulation may help to improve conditions for those looking for rooming house units?

Why did the city establish a licensing program for rooming houses?

What challenges have you encountered since operating that program?

What effect has the licensing program had on rooming houses?

What do you see as the strengths of the licensing program? What are its weaknesses?

At times the city has used the term "quasi-rooming house" to describe some housing options.

What experiences have you had in dealing with quasi-rooming houses or issues related to them?

What particular challenges does the city face in regulating rooming houses?

What does inspection of rooming houses involve?

Who is responsible for inspecting rooming houses?

What actions can be taken after an inspection?

Any additional comments, or question I should have asked?

Housing Advocates

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me today. I appreciate you finding the time in your schedule to give us your perspective on rooming houses, or single-room occupancies.

Could you begin first with telling me a little bit about yourself – maybe your job and what involvement you have with affordable housing issues?

Given the different perspectives people have on rooming houses, how would you define what a rooming house is? [*Possible follow up:* What makes it different from other kinds of rentals?]

What population or clientele does the rooming house serve?

What experiences have you had in dealing with rooming houses?

What kinds of issues have you encountered in dealing with rooming houses? [*follow ups:* Any issues related to: living conditions, management of the property, affordability of the units, city regulation of the use, behavior of residents or landlords]

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address some of these issues related to rooming houses?

In what ways are the numbers of rooming house units changing in Halifax?

How are the locations of rooming house units changing?

What factors may be responsible for changes in the number or location of units?

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address issues related to changes in the number or location of rooming houses in the city? (RH or QRH - speaking broadly)

In what ways do municipal regulations affect rooming houses?

What kinds of municipal regulation may help to improve conditions for those looking for rooming house units?

How do economic conditions affect supply and demand for rooming house units?

How affordable are rooming house units in Halifax?

How conveniently located are rooming house units in Halifax?

How well managed are rooming house units in Halifax?

What kinds of things make rooming houses an attractive housing option?

What kinds of things make them an unattractive housing option?

What do you see as the major challenges facing this kind of housing?

What particular challenges do tenants face in finding housing in rooming houses?

What particular challenges do tenants face in living in rooming houses?

What kinds of programs may help to improve conditions for tenants in rooming houses?

Is there anything I should have asked that I did not ask? (any additional comments)?

Housing Providers

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me today. I appreciate you finding the time in your schedule to give us your perspective on rooming houses, or single-room occupancies.

Could you begin first with telling me a little bit about yourself – maybe how you got into managing rooming houses?

Given the different perspectives people have on rooming houses, how would you define what a rooming house is? [*Possible follow up:* What makes it different from other kinds of rentals?]

What population or clientele does the rooming house serve?

What experiences have you had in dealing with rooming houses?

What kinds of issues have you encountered in dealing with rooming houses? [*follow ups:* Any issues related to: living conditions, challenges in managing properties, city regulation of the use, behavior of residents]

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address some of these issues related to rooming houses?

In what ways are the numbers of rooming house units changing in Halifax? (*to your knowledge)

How are the locations of rooming house units changing?

What factors may be responsible for changes in the number or location of units?

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address issues related to changes in the number or location of rooming houses in the city?

In what ways do municipal regulations affect rooming houses?

What kinds of municipal regulation may help to improve conditions for those looking for rooming house units?

How do economic conditions affect supply and demand for rooming house units?

How affordable are rooming house units in Halifax?

How conveniently located are rooming house units in Halifax?

How well managed are rooming house units in Halifax? (other landlords)

What do you see as the major challenges facing this kind of housing?

What kinds of supports could help address the challenges facing this kind of housing?

Any additional comments, or question I should have asked?

Rooming House Residents

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me today. I appreciate you finding the time in your schedule to give us your perspective on rooming houses, or single-room occupancies.

Could you begin first with telling me a little bit about yourself – maybe when you first lived in a rooming house and where that was located?

Given the different perspectives people have on rooming houses, how would you define what a rooming house is? [*Possible follow up:* What makes it different from other kinds of rentals?]

What population or clientele does the rooming house serve?

What experiences have you had in living in this form of housing?

What kinds of issues have you encountered? [living conditions, management of the property, affordability of the units, behavior of tenants/landlords]

What kinds of things make rooming houses an attractive housing option?

What kinds of things make them an unattractive housing option?

What particular challenges do tenants face in finding housing in rooming houses?

How affordable are rooming house units in Halifax?

How conveniently located are rooming house units in Halifax?

How well managed are rooming house units in Halifax?

What kinds of programs may help to improve conditions for tenants in rooming houses?

In what ways are the numbers of rooming house units changing in Halifax?

How are the locations of rooming house units changing?

What factors may be responsible for changes in the number or location of units?

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address issues related to changes in the number or location of rooming houses in the city?

In what ways do municipal regulations affect rooming houses?

What kinds of municipal regulation may help to improve conditions for those looking for rh units?

Any additional comments, or question I should have asked?

Neighbourhood Association Members

Thanks for agreeing to talk with me today. I appreciate you finding the time in your schedule to give us your perspective on rooming houses, or single-room occupancies.

Could you begin first with telling me a little bit about yourself and what involvement you have with rooming houses or affordable housing issues in general?

Given the different perspectives people have on rooming houses, how would you define what a rooming house is? How is it different from other rentals?

What population or clientele does the rooming house serve?

What experiences have you had in dealing with rooming houses?

What kinds of issues have you encountered in dealing with rooming houses?

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address some of these issues related to rooming houses?

To your knowledge, in what ways are the numbers of rooming house units changing in Halifax?

Are the locations of rooming house units changing?

What factors may be responsible for changes in the number or location of units?

What kinds of initiatives could the city take to address issues related to changes in the number or location of rooming houses in the city?

In what ways do municipal regulations affect rooming houses?

What kinds of municipal regulation may help to improve conditions for those looking for rooming house units?

What particular issues have you faced with rooming houses in your area?

How responsive have landlords been to your concerns?

How responsive has the city been to your concerns?